

THE COURTESAN AND THE DANCING GIRL

Violetta and Salome are not just two of the best-known title-roles in mainstream opera; they are also two of the most challenging parts in the soprano repertory. Of course, when they take the stage in Opera Ireland's forthcoming season at the Gaiety, it will be in their familiar operatic incarnations. But each of them also had a pre-operatic existence as a non-singing character on

the Paris stage before Giuseppe Verdi and Richard Strauss respectively gave them immortality through their music. Violetta Valéry was originally Marguerite Gautier, the camellia-wearing lady who loved and died in Alexandre Dumas's 1852 drama *La dame aux camélias*. Marguerite, in turn, was based on the real-life courtesan Marie Duplessis. Salome comes from further back: she is mentioned, although not by name, in the New Testament. She first ogled the head of John the Baptist on-stage as the protagonist in Oscar Wilde's French language play in 1894.

Violetta will be sung by popular Dublin soprano Regina Nathan. Regina was the splendid Antonia in the spring 1998 production of Offenbach's *The Tales of Hoffmann*. Her other Opera Ireland roles have been Mimi in *La Bohème*, Susanna in *Le nozze di Figaro* and

Zerlina in *Don Giovanni*. American soprano Karen Notare, who triumphed as Lady Macbeth in Verdi's opera two years ago, returns to sing Salome.



PRESENTS

LA TRAVIATA

Giuseppe Verdi
Sung in Italian with English surtitles
Regina Nathan, Jean-Pierre Furlan, Guido Paëvatalu;
Opera Ireland Chorus
RTÉ Concert Orchestra
Conductor: Jérôme Pillement
Producer: Stephan Groegler
Designer: Véronique Seymat.

April 10, 12, 14, 16 & 18 1999,
at 7.30 pm

SALOME

Richard Strauss
Sung in German with English surtitles
Karen Notare, Julia Juon, Marianne Rørholm, Evan Bowers, Volker Vogel,
John Wegner
RTÉ Concert Orchestra
Conductor: Laurent Wagner
Producer: Joël Lauwers
Designer: Louis Désiré.

April 11, 13, 15 & 17 1999, at 7.30 pm

GAIETY THEATRE
DUBLIN
Opera Ireland Booking
Office (01) 453 5519

Regina Nathan as Antonia in *The Tales of Hoffmann*

Trawling THE OPERA WEB

Paddy Brennan whets the appetite with a tantalising look at the Aladdin's cave of treasures awaiting opera enthusiasts on the internet.

Welcome to cyberworld. There are literally hundreds of web sites relating to opera, with more appearing each month. With a little bit of organisation, lots of discrimination, and endless patience, it is relatively easy to compile a list of favourite sites.

These should be informative and entertaining, and include useful information either directly or through links to related sites. There's a world of Opera information to be explored - history of opera, composers, singers (including fan clubs), performance, schedules etc etc. All the major companies throughout the world are on the web and ticket purchases for performances can be easily and safely arranged. In the same way, books and recordings can be sourced and ordered. Join a mailing list or newsgroup and meet opera fans from all parts of the world for discussion on opera and related matters.

So, what do you need to participate in this global Opernfest?

A computer, ideally a multi-media one, with a modem (phone connection). Sign on with an Internet service provider (Tinet, IOL, AOL, Indigo etc.) who will provide all the necessary software to allow you navigate; and away you go in among the marvels of cyberspace.

To help get you started here are some useful sites:

OPERA IRELAND
www.opera-ireland.ie

OPERA GLASS. A List of opera companies with links to given companies sites, where schedules, cast lists, ticket information and company history are available.

<http://rick.stanford.edu/opera/main.html>

Other sites with good links/search engines are:
<http://www.kiva.net/~penguin/operalnx.htm>
<http://www.internets.com/opera.htm>

OPERABASE will let you know what's going on in other venues in the same city, or nearby, in terms of location or time, as well as maps, artist searches, press reviews, house/booking/season details for 450 houses/festivals.

<http://operabase.com>

There is a wonderfully opinionated Italian site, also available in English (sort of), featuring opera of the month, quizzes, reviews and a karaoke section (for home use only).

<http://www.opera.it>

A talking dictionary? Admit it, there's an aria, opera, composer or even a singer whose name you can't pronounce. Well, help (of sorts) is at hand. Just click on a name and a sound file plays on your computer speaker. The dictionary is in two volumes; one for operas and one for composers.

<http://gray.music.rhodes.edu/operahtmls/works.html>

Opera terms:
<http://gray.music.rhodes.edu/operahtmls/terms.html>

Opera in Ireland can be found at Gary Stephens pages:

<http://www.lochnet.com/client/gsoi-singers.html>

There is an extensive collection of original language libretti available at:

<http://php.indiana.edu/~lneff/libretti.html>

Some singers' sites

Cecilia Bartoli:
<http://www.lochnet.com/client/gscb.html>

Franco Corelli:
<http://www.geocities.com/Vienna/Strasse/3468/corelli.htm>

Magda Olivero:
<http://www.magdaolivero.com/>

Samuel Ramey:
<http://www.atreus.com/rameysam.html>

Thomas Hampson:
<http://www.hampsong.com/>

These singers' pages are usually organised by fans or record companies. Sometimes the artist has a high level of input, eg Thomas Hampson's page. Many artists take part in on-line 'chats' with fans, details of which are flagged in advance on the relevant web page. Many more singers' pages are available by using the search engines listed above, all you have to do is point and click on the relevant name/site and your computer will do the rest.

Try it. Apart from the incredible wealth of information available at the click of your mouse, it's great fun.

OPERA IRELAND NEWS

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HOW Beautiful IS THE Princess Salome

"Wie schön ist die Prinzessin Salome heute Nacht!". The opening words of the opera *Salome* are sung by Narraboth, a young Syrian officer who is infatuated with King Herod's nubile step-daughter. They are also, of course, the opening

words of Oscar Wilde's original play, where the love-struck speaker is called simply "The Young Syrian". Wilde wrote his drama in French as a vehicle for the legendary Sarah Bernhardt, although the "Divine Sarah" never actually got to play the

role. It was published in 1893 and first performed in Paris a year later.

The story of how "the daughter of Herodias" danced for King Herod and was given the severed head of John the Baptist as her reward is told in the Gospels of St Matthew and St Luke. Oscar Wilde was also influenced by Gustave Flaubert's short story – the source of Massenet's 1881 opera *Hérodiade* – and the paintings of Gustave Moreau. Hedwig Lachmann's German translation of Wilde's play was premiered in Breslau in 1901, but it was Max Rheinhardt's notable Berlin staging the following year that inspired Richard Strauss to set it to music.

Salome, which had a successful premiere at the Dresden Court Opera on 9 December 1905, was Strauss's third opera and the first to achieve world-wide success. Like all of his vocal writing, it glories in the exploitation of the soprano voice, particularly in its upper register. Strauss was married to the opera singer Pauline De Ahna and he is said to have created all of his high female roles with her voice in mind. The title role in *Salome* certainly abounds in soaring melody. Indeed, the composer offers an amazing array of tonal colours, both vocally and instrumentally, throughout his extraordinary score, a score that



Karen Notare

fuses text - a direct translation of Wilde's original French - and music into an integrated and powerful lyric-drama

The setting is the palace of Herod Antipas, Tetrarch of Judea. Salome, the daughter of Herod's second wife Herodias, is obsessed with John the Baptist (Jochanaan in the opera). But when the Prophet rejects her advances, she demands his head as her reward for dancing for King Herod. Salome's long encounter with the baritone Jochanaan is as musically rewarding as it is dramatically riveting; and the final scene, when the besotted girl drools over the Baptist's severed head and finally gets to kiss his lips, is devastating in its impact. In between comes the famous "Dance of the Seven Veils", Herod's increasingly frenetic pleading with his step-daughter to modify her demands, and a telling passage for a solo bass Nazarene in which he proclaims his belief that the long-awaited Messiah has finally come amongst His people.

Karen Notare, who sang an acclaimed Lady Macbeth in Opera Ireland's 1997 production of Verdi's *Macbeth*, returns to sing Salome. The large cast also includes John Wegner as Jochanaan, Volker Vogel as Herod, Julia Juon as Herodias and Evan Bowers as Narraboth. Marianne Rørholm, who was Nicklausse in *The Tales of Hoffmann* last year, sings Herod's Page, a role she has recorded twice, under Sinopoli and Schönwandt. Joël Lauwers and Louis Désire, director and designer of last year's *Hoffman*, return for Salome; and the opera is conducted by Laurent Wagner.

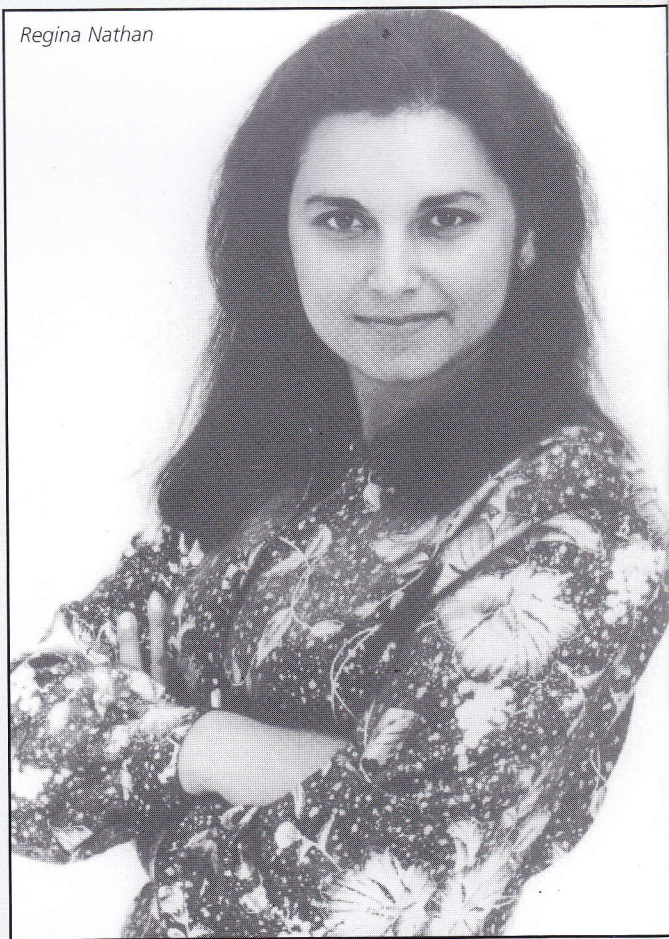


Design for Salome by Aubrey Beardsley

THE Lady

It is not known for certain when Giuseppe Verdi first encountered his 'lady of the camellias'. Alexandre Dumas's drama *La dame aux camélias* was first produced in Paris in February 1852 and the composer probably attended a performance later that year. But the novel from which Dumas adapted the play had been around since 1848. Indeed, it was published within

Regina Nathan



months of the death of the real-life woman who inspired it.

Marguerite Gautier, the protagonist in both novel and play, is a fictionalised version of

OF THE Camellias

the famous Parisian courtesan Marie Duplessis, who died of consumption at the early age of twenty-three. It is generally accepted that Dumas was one of her lovers and that the character Armand Duval is a thinly-disguised self-portrait. Verdi and his librettist Piave changed the names yet again, so that in the opera they became Violetta Valéry and Alfredo Germont.

La traviata – the title translates roughly as ‘the woman gone astray’ – tells the bitter-sweet story of the doomed affair between the consumptive courtesan and her tenor lover. It is a story of self-sacrifice, of lovers’ misunderstandings, and of reconciliation that comes too late. And Verdi has enhanced the play’s already highly emotional impact with a veritable treasure-house of his most wonderful melodies.

Everyone knows that the first performance of *La traviata* in Venice in March 1853 was a total fiasco. But it is difficult at this remove to know exactly why. The received view that the main roles were miscast is only partly true. The generous proportions of the leading lady, Fanny Salvini-Donatelli, may well have diminished the credibility of her portrayal of the consumptive heroine; but her actual singing was greatly admired and her big scene at the end of Act 1 was greeted with an ovation. It is true that the baritone was below

par, but the most likely reason for the failure was the nature of the plot, which was probably too risqué for the conservative Venetians of those times. It used to be said that the contemporary setting and costumes were another negative factor; but the truth is that the original production back-dated the action a couple of centuries and it was some decades before the opera was eventually given in its intended 1840s setting.

Whatever the causes behind the opera’s initial problems, time has totally vindicated the composer and *La traviata* remains one of the most frequently performed works, not only in the Verdi canon but in the entire operatic repertoire. To the successful formulae of its two predecessors, *Rigoletto* and *Il trovatore*, Verdi in *La traviata* introduces a heightened skill in character delineation that looks forward to the great masterpieces of his last period. But never for a moment does he forego his gift of being able to enhance the dramatic situations with some of the most memorable melodies in his whole output. The drinking song; the soprano’s double aria at the end of Act 1, her encounter with her lover’s father, and her harrowing deathbed scene;

the many superb solos, duets and ensembles; the two famous preludes; all contribute to a work that looms high in the annals of operatic masterpieces.

The outstanding Dublin soprano Regina Nathan, who was a fine Antonia in Opera Ireland’s 1998 production of *The Tales of Hoffmann*, sings the demanding title role. She will be partnered by Jean-Pierre Furlan, her Hoffmann in the same production. Baritone Guido Paëvatalu makes his first appearance here as Alfredo’s father, Giorgio Germont. *La traviata* will be conducted by Jérôme Pillement, directed by Stephan Groegler and designed by Véronique Seymat.



Jean-Pierre Furlan

WINTER RETROSPECT

Memories of Opera Ireland's presentation of *Die Fledermaus*

The tenor Michael Kristensen gave the most pleasure ... he made a good partner for Janis Kelly. Whenever she was singing the emotional tension moved up a notch
IRISH TIMES



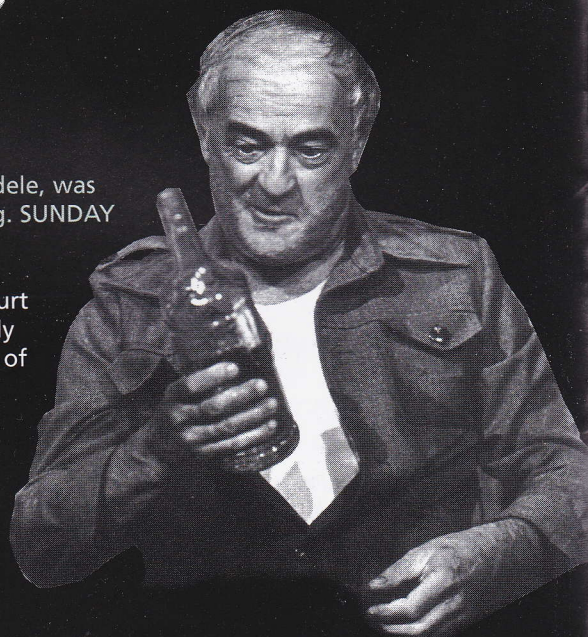
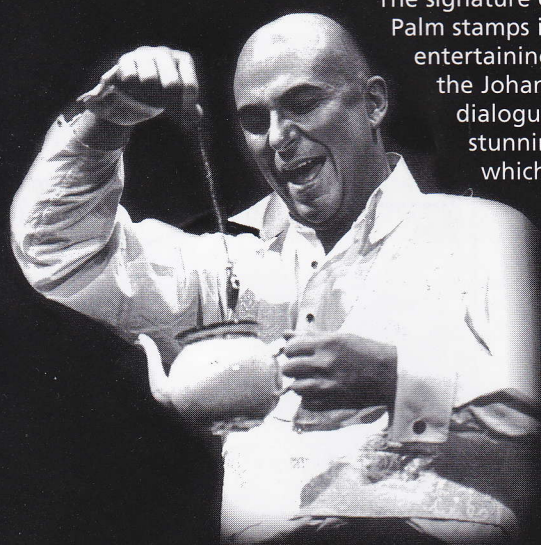
Janis Kelly was the undeniable star of the show ... John Hancock's towering stage presence and sonorous voice made Dr Falke an imposing character. Danish tenor Michael Kristensen was ideally cast as Alfred, singing with tonal colour and making the most of his big comic moments ... Richard Brunner was the best Eisenstein I have encountered for a long time.
SUNDAY INDEPENDENT

Louise Walsh's sluttish 'Dub' maid, Adele, was marvellous ... a real star in the making.
SUNDAY TRIBUNE

The signature of avant-garde director Kurt Palm stamps itself early on in this highly entertaining and spirited renovation of the Johann Strauss operetta ... The dialogues he's adapted are stunningly comical, not least of which is the immaculate employment of Frank Kelly as Frosch.
EXAMINER

David T Heusel drew some glorious playing from the RTÉ Concert Orchestra.
IRISH NEWS

The RTÉ Concert Orchestra, conducted by David T Heusel, provided plenty of foot-tapping melody and accompanied the singing with the requisite warmth.
IRISH TIMES



**Memories of Opera Ireland's
presentations of *Cavalleria rusticana* &
Pagliacci double-bill.**

Sylvie Brunet was a truly distressed Santuzza with a rich Italian timbre. Thanks to the director, designer and most of the cast, this Cav & Pag was entertaining and reminded us of what a pair of jewels these operas are.
SUNDAY TRIBUNE

Patrick Power's tenor performance ... was the highlight of the two shows.
EXAMINER

At its core was the accomplished tenor of Patrick Power as Canio. This was a powerful study of a man's decline to madness and murder. Daniella Lojarro was an accomplished singing actress. The chorus gave a magnificent account of their parts. IRISH NEWS

Jonathan Veira painted a vivid picture of the vengeful Tonio. IRISH TIMES

Declan Kelly and Martin Higgins made good impressions in their smaller roles.
EVENING HERALD

Kaegi's skill is in opening the hearts of his characters for the audience. He is an operatic pathologist.
IRISH NEWS

Bruno Schwengl's sets were works of art in themselves.
EXAMINER

The Opera Ireland Chorus were powerfully effective and Alexander Anissimov conducted both operas with a sense of urgent purpose.
IRISH INDEPENDENT

Cavalleria rusticana and Pagliacci

OPERA

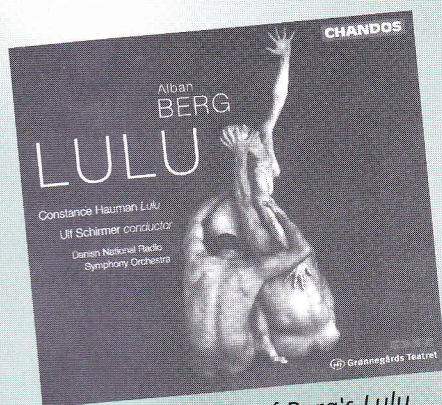
AT HOME

Michael Dervan, Music Critic of the Irish Times, samples some recent recordings of 20th-century opera.

When John Allen asked me would I write about 20th-century opera on CD for Opera Ireland News, I felt straight away he wasn't talking about *Tosca*, *Rusalka*, *Rosenkavalier* or *The Golden Cockerel*. I was right. He had in mind those operas which are not yet viewed with wholehearted enthusiasm by opera lovers, or at least a certain sub-category of the opera-going public. He was addressing, I suppose, the issue that's being raised by people who point to *Turandot* as the most recent work to be admitted to the standard operatic repertoire. And *Turandot*, don't forget, was premièred as long ago as 1926. Transpose the situation back to that year, and you're looking at a standard repertoire that would feature nothing after *Lohengrin* or *La traviata*.

The situation, of course, is not that extreme. After all, Berg, Stravinsky, and Britten can be heard regularly in major houses around the world. But in the sense that no-one has produced works that would sit as easily as *Turandot* in the repertoire of the likes of the Moldovan National Opera Company on tour, the point remains.

So, understanding the nature of the challenge being laid down, and feeling inadequate to its demands, I immediately set about trying to narrow it. Rather than pretending a comprehensive knowledge of 20th-century opera on disc, I suggested I might survey some of the recent issues from, roughly speaking, the post-Puccini era. As it turned out, the list of composers in the discs that arrived goes, literally, from A to Z: Thomas Adès, Gerald Barry, Alban Berg, Michael Daugherty, Hans Krása, Bruno Maderna, Gian Carlo Menotti, Hilda Paredes, and Alexander Zemlinsky.



Chandos's new set of Berg's *Lulu*, CHAN 9540 (3), is the fifth to be listed in the current catalogue, making more recordings of the piece available than there were for a whole rake of standard works just 20 years ago. The recording is with Danish forces, from the stable of Danish Radio in partnership with the Grønnegårds Theatre rather than the Royal Opera. It documents a production, mounted during Copenhagen's term as European City of Culture 1996, in the Ridehuset (riding-school) at Christiansborg Palace through the dispensation of Queen Margrethe, who also attended one of the eight performances, the first in Scandinavia of *Lulu* in its full, three-act version.

The performance of Berg's probing examination of sexuality, an exercise that is to most operatic sexual intrigue what Balzac and Zola are to Mills and Boon, is a creditable one. Conductor Ulf Schirmer eschews the etched clarity and expressive point of Boulez, but the achievement is limited by the monochrome central portrayal of the heftless Constance Hauman as *Lulu*.



Alexander Zemlinsky felt his uncompleted final opera, *König Kandaules*, to be "ultra-modern", but its harmonic world may be more to the taste of operatic traditionalists than the rich and complex *Lulu*. Capriccio's recording (60 071-2, two discs) stems from the Hamburg Staatsoper's 1996 premièred by Antony Beaumont. Although there are shortcomings in the casting (the main roles of Kandaules, Gyges and Nyssia are sung by James O'Neal, Monte Pederson and Nina Warren), Zemlinsky's handling of this strange, triangular tale (after Gide's play) exerts a potency that's both erotic and exotic.

Zemlinsky's pupil, Hans Krása, who disappeared into Auschwitz in 1944, based his *Verlobung im Traum* (Betrothal in a Dream) on Dostoyevsky's *Uncle's Dream*. Krása's is a wide-ranging eclecticism, with vocal lines from simple parlendo to far-flung angular, and musical references from up-to-the-minute dissonance to tunefully popular. Act I even incorporates a performance of "Casta diva" – it's the intention of Sina (Juanita Lascarro) to impress her charms and marriageability on the visiting Prince – and the music of

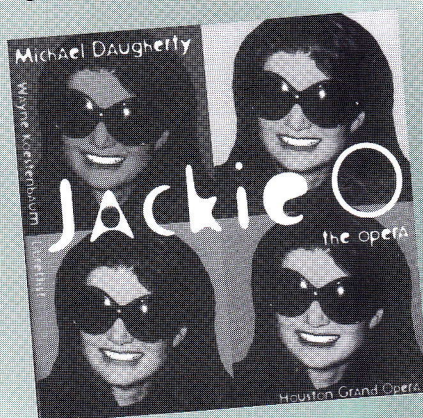
the opera proper is effortlessly embroidered around it. Conductor Lothar Zagrosek and his cast (Decca 455 587-2, two discs) make the case of the work strongly, but the composer doesn't really manage to gell his impressively gauged moments into a rewarding whole.

Gian Carol Menotti's moralistic, mid-Sixties, *Martin's Lie*, getting its première recording under Richard Hickox on Chandos (CHAN 9605), is familiarly soft-centred, unpalatable or delectable, depending on how you respond to the prince of TV operas. Menotti always handles words with clarity – given his texts, for me that becomes part of the problem with his work – whereas Mexican composer Hilda Paredes (born 1959) does exactly the opposite in her chamber opera *The Seventh Seed* (mode 60), one of the first fruits of the Garden Venture in 1989. I'm not sure how anyone would successfully set some of the lines in Karen Whiteson's libretto (for instance: "All former artifacts are but arrows pointed towards the achievement of the mind which catalogues them in reams of script."), but the overall effect here, in spite of the presence of the Arditti Quartet, is expressively opaque.



There's no such complaint to be made against the work of the

youngest composer in our group, Thomas Adès (born 1971). The reception accorded his 1995 *Powder Her Face* (EMI CDS 556649 2, two discs), charting the undoing of the sexually adventurous Duchess of Argyll, has added to the already considerable burden of being regarded as the great white hope of British music. As in a second work dealing with a real 20th-century figure, *Jackie O* by Michael



Daugherty (born 1954), sassiness seems to be one of the main authorial concerns. Although spawned within the world of opera, the touchstone for both works seems to me to rest closer to revue than opera, Adès standing top of the class for the sophistication of his instrumentation, Daugherty, striving to impress through a brasher vernacular. Impressive, yes, but unsympathetic both.

In a way, the two remaining operas are the most radical in our list. Bruno Maderna's *Don Perlimplin* (Stradivarius STR 33436) is a "radiophonic opera" after Lorca – it won the Prix Italia in 1962 – with the main character appearing not as a singer but as a flute (here Lorenzo Missaglia), the mother-in-law as a group of saxophones, and actors outnumbering the single sung role – the role of Belisa is attractively

taken by soprano Alda Caiello. Maderna was a leading avant-gardist in the Sixties but at the same time no purist (I'm sure the diversity of style in this work would have occasioned some negative comment when new), and the players of the Divertimento Ensemble under Sandro Gorli negotiate the stylistic shifts with ease and capture the music's underlying lyricism with real sensitivity. A little gem.

Gerald Barry's all-male *The Triumph of Beauty and Deceit* (Largo 5135) is both concentrated and explosive. Listening to it is like being flung into a horizontal free-fall where the senses are stimulated at a rate of change that challenges the body's ability to process what's flying by. The opera, with a libretto by Meredith Oakes, was commissioned by Channel 4 and broadcast with garish, pop-video visuals which the composer now says he hated. For sound alone, you'll find little in the history of opera to match its leaping energy or the contortionist elasticity it demands of its singers. With a committed cast and the Composers Ensemble under the sure hand of Diego Masson, the total effect is intoxicating and dizzying.

In brief, and acknowledging the Berg as being in a class apart, if I had to shortlist three of the above works for the curious, they would be the Zemlinsky, the Maderna and the Barry.

EUROPEAN OPERA FESTIVALS 1999

Information as available at mid-January

Salzburg, Austria

Easter Festival
Mar 27-Apr 5
TRISTAN UND ISOLDE (Wagner)
A-5010 Salzburg
Postfach 140
Tel 0043-662-8045-579 ;
Fax 0043-662-8045-760
e-mail: info@salzburgfestival.at

Berlin, Germany

Staatsoper unter den Linden
Festtag
ar 28-Apr 5
Berlin-Parkett Foyer,
Unter den Linden 7,
10109 Berlin, Germany
Tel: 0049 30 34 38 401
Fax: 0049 30 34 38 455
TANNHÄUSER (Wagner)
LOHENGRIN (Wagner)
MOSES UND ARON (Schoenberg)

Glyndebourne, England

May 19-Aug 29
Glyndebourne, Lewes,
East Sussex BN8 5UU
Tel 0044 1273 813 813;
Fax 0044 1273 812 686
LA CLEMENZA DI TITO (Mozart)
PELLEAS ET MELISENDE (Debussy)
ROSE LINDA (Handel)
MANON LESCAUT (Puccini)
THE BARTERED BRIDE (Smetana)
FLIGHT (Jonathan Dove)

Munich, Germany

Jun 30-Jul 31
Maximilianstrasse 11,
D 80539 München
Fax 0049 89 2185 1903
(booking only)
Tel: 0049 89 2185 1920
(information only)
Fax: 0049 89 2185 1023
(information only)
OTELLO (Verdi)
LOHENGRIN (Wagner)
DER FREISCHÜTZ (Weber)
ARIADNE AUF NAXOS (Strauss)
ANNA BOLENA (Donizetti)
L'ORFEO (Monteverdi)
AIDA (Verdi)
LA CLEMENZA DI TITO (Mozart)
KATYA KABANOVA (Janáček)
SIMON BOCCANEGRA (Verdi)
ELEKTRA (Strauss)
LE NOZZE DI FIGARO (Mozart)
DER ROSENKAVALIER (Strauss)
DIE MEISTERSINGER VON
NÜRNBERG (Wagner)

Savonlinna, Finland

Jul 3-Aug 1
Olavinkatu 27, FIN-57130
Savonlinna
Tel: 00358 14 47 67 50;
Fax: 00358 15 47 67 540
Tannhäuser (Wagner)
LA FORZA DEL DESTINO (Verdi)
CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA
(Mascagni)/ PAGLIACCI
(Leoncavallo)
FAUST (Gounod)
DER FREISCHÜTZ (Weber)
DIALOGUES DES CARMELITES
(Poulenc)

Verona, Italy

Jul 4-Aug 30
Piazza Biza 28, Verona
Tel 0039 94 800 5151;
Fax 0039 94 801 3287
AIDA (Verdi) CARMEN (Bizet)
MADAMA BUTTERFLY (Puccini)
TOSCA (Puccini)
THE MERRY WIDOW (Lehár)

Bregenz, Austria

Jul 5-Aug 19
Kartenbüro, A-6901, Bregenz
Tel 0043 5574 4920224;
Fax 0043 5574 4920228
UN BALLO IN MASCHERA

Macerata, Italy

Jul 15-Aug 13
Associazione Arena Sferisterio,
Via Santa Maria della Porta 65,
62100 Macerata
Tel 0039 733 261 334/5;
Fax 0039 733 233 50
OBERTO (Verdi) OTELLO (Verdi)
MADAMA BUTTERFLY (Puccini)
LA TRAVIATA (Verdi)

Salzburg, Austria

Jul 24-Aug 29
A-5010 Salzburg
Postfach 140
Tel 0043-662-8045-579 ;
Fax 0043-662-8045-760
e-mail: info@salzburgfestival.at
LES BOREADES (Rameau)
DIE ZAUBERFLÖTE (Mozart)
DOKTOR FAUST (Busoni)
DON GIOVANNI (Mozart)
DON CARLO (Verdi)
LA DAMNATION DE FAUST (Berlioz)
LULU (Berg)

Bayreuth, Germany

Jul 25-Aug 28
Postbox 10 02 62, D-95402,
Bayreuth
Tel 0049 921 202 21
WAGNER FESTIVAL
LOHENGRIN
DER FLIEGENDE HOLLÄNDER
PARSIFAL
TRISTAN UND ISOLDE
DIE MEISTERSINGER VON
NÜRNBERG

Orange, France

Jul-Aug
BP 205, 18 Place Silvain, 84107
Orange
Tel 0033 9034 2424;
Fax 0033 9034 8767
LA TRAVIATA (Verdi)
NORMA (Bellini)

Pesaro, Italy

Aug 8-22
Via Rossini, Pasero
Tel 0039 721 301 61;
Fax 0039 721 309 79
ROSSINI FESTIVAL
ADINATANCREDIIL VIAGGIO A
REIMS

Wexford, Ireland

Oct 14-31
Theatre Royal, Wexford
Tel (053) 22400; Fax (053) 24289
DIE KÖNIGIN VON SABA
(Goldmark)
THE HAUNTED MANOR
(Moniuszko)
SIBERIA (Giordano)

BOX OFFICE INFORMATION FOR FESTIVALS WHICH HAVE NOT YET ANNOUNCED THEIR 1999 PROGRAMMES

Florence, Italy

Maggio Musicale: April 21-Jun 12
Tel 0039 55 211 158;
Fax 0039 55 277 9410

Amsterdam, Netherlands

May -Jun
Waterlooplein 22, 1011 PG
Amsterdam
Tel 0031 20 551 8922;
Fax 0031 20 551 8311

Dresden, Germany

May 16-Jun 1
Postfach 20 27 23, 01219 Dresden
Tel 0048 351 471 50 97;
Fax 0049 351 471 78 96

Vienna, Austria

Vienna Festival: May -June
Lahárgasse 11, 1060 Vienna
Tel 0043 586 1676;
Fax 0043 586 167 649

Aix-en-Provence, France

July 3-31
Espace Forbin, 3 Place Rewald,
13160 Aix-en-Provence
Tel 0033 4221 6969;
Fax 0033 4221 9165

Drottningholm, Sweden

Jul-Aug
Tel 0046 8 660 8225;
Fax 0046 8 665 1473

IRISH OPERA DIARY

Spring/Summer 1999

Information as available in mid-January 1999

Opera Ireland Lecture

Dublin, Mercer Hotel,

Feb 1, 8 pm:

SQUARING UP TO WAGNER'S RING: John Allen presents a beginner's guide to Richard Wagner's massive four-act *Der Ring des Nibelungen*

Lyric Opera

Dublin, National Concert Hall

Tel: (01) 475 1572 Fax: (01) 475 1507

e-mail: info@nch.ie

Feb 3, 7.30 pm

NABUCCO (Verdi) Tel: (01) 453 5519

Tasmin Dives, Eirian James, Sandra Olman, Alan Oake, Matthew Gilsenan, Mark Holland, John Milne; c. Marco Zambelli, p. Vivian Coates

Opera Theatre Company

Booking (01) 679 4962

THE RAKE'S PROGRESS (Stravinsky)

Louise Walsh, Frances McCafferty, Iain Paton, James Nelson, Sam McElroy; RTÉ Concert Orchestra, c. Richard Farnes, p. James Conway, d. Joe Vanek.

Thurs 4 Feb Dundalk, Town Hall

Ph: 042 32276

Sun 7 Feb Cork Opera House

Ph: 021 270022

Tues 9 Feb Wexford, Theatre Royal

Ph: 053 22144

Thurs 11 Feb Derry, St Columb's Theatre

Ph: 01 504 262845/262880

Sat 13 Feb Galway, Leisureland

Ph: 091 562295/798140

Wed 17 & Thurs 18 Feb Dublin, RDS

Ph: 01 670 8326

Sat 20 Feb Enniskillen, Ardhoven Theatre

Ph: 01 365 325440

(all performances commence at 8pm)

Opera International Ltd

TOSCA (Puccini)

Ludmila Magomedova, Alexi Repchinsky;

c. Alexandru Samoila.

Belfast, Waterfront Hall,

Feb 16 & 17, 7.45 pm

Dublin, National Concert Hall, Feb 18,

8 pm

Cork Opera House,

Feb 19 & 20, 8 pm

Limerick University Concert Hall

Feb 21 and 22, 8pm

Opera Ireland Lecture

Dublin, Mercer Hotel,

Mar 1, 8 pm

UNDER THE INFLUENCE: Topping in opera, and some of its consequences

Opera Ireland Lecture

Dublin, Mercer Hotel, Mar 28, 8 pm

LADIES WILDE AND FRAIL: John Allen

previews Strauss's *Salome* and Verdi's *La traviata*

Opera Ireland

Dublin, Gaiety Theatre

Booking (01) 677 1717

April 10, 12, 14, 16 & 18,

7.30 pm

LA TRAVIATA (Verdi)

Regina Nathan, Jean-Pierre Furlan, Guido

Paëvatalu;

c. Jérôme Pillement; p. Stephan Groegler;

d. Veronique Seymat

SALOME (Strauss)

April 11, 13, 15 & 17, 7.30 pm

Karen Notare, Julia Juon, Marianne

Rørholm, Volker Vogel, Frodo Olsen;

c. Laurent Wagner; p. Joël Lauwers;

d. Louis Désiré.

Opera Theatre Company

Booking (01) 679 4962

RODELINDA (Handel)

Helen Williams, Yvonne Howard,

Jonathan Peter Kenny, Nicholas Sears,

Charles Johnston. The London Baroque

Sinfonia (an orchestra of twelve playing

period instruments) c. Lawrence

Cummings, c. James Conway.

30 April, Cork, Everyman Theatre

4 May, Limerick (Belltable)

6 May, Galway (TownHall Theatre)

8 May, Sligo (Hawk's Well)

10 May, Portadown or Mullingar

13 & 14 May Dublin (RDS) x 2

16 May Belfast (tbc)

17 & 18 May, Edinburgh

21 May, Coleraine (Riverside)

A GIFT OF OPERA

Why not give your family and friends some live opera as a present.

Opera Ireland Gift Vouchers, which can be used to purchase tickets for any of our 1999 productions, are available in a range of prices from £5 upwards.

Gift Vouchers are available from

OPERA IRELAND

John Player House

276-288 South Circular Road,

Dublin 8, Ireland

Tel: (01) 453 5519

Fax: (01) 453 5521

UPDATING THE AUDIENCE PROFILE

An impressive return of just under 700 completed questionnaires was the satisfactory outcome of an audience survey carried out during Opera Ireland's winter season at the Gaiety Theatre.

The lucky winner of dinner-for-two at the Merrion Hotel was **Lorcan Gogan** of Blanchardstown.

OPERA IRELAND/IRISH TIMES LECTURES 1998/99

The remaining three illustrated opera talks by John Allen are:

Monday 1 February, 8 pm:

SQUARING UP TO WAGNER'S RING: A beginner's guide to Richard Wagner's massive four-act *Der Ring des Nibelungen*

Monday 1 March, 8 pm

UNDER THE INFLUENCE: Topping in opera, and some of its consequences

Monday 28 March, 8 pm

LADIES WILDE AND FRAIL: Previews of Strauss's *Salome* and Verdi's *La traviata*

All lectures are at

THE MERCER HOTEL

at the junction of Mercer Street and York Street, Dublin 2

Monday evenings at 8 pm

Admission is free for members, please contact Opera Ireland to reserve your place and avoid disappointment on/at (01) 453 5519

SUPPORTING LADIES

We all know the old saying about what lay "behind every successful man". But there are many people who don't know that behind many of the achievements of what was then the DGOS and is now Opera Ireland was a group of women who for thirty-one years ran a thriving fund-raising function that brought in many thousands of pounds every season.

The DGOS Ladies' Committee, which finally wound-up its activities last year, was begun back in May 1967 by the late Don Ferdinando d'Ardia Caracciolo (Freddie to his friends and everybody in the society). Actually, what Freddie Caracciolo did was to re-ignite an expired activity that had run all sorts of amazing functions in earlier times. The first Chairperson of the new body was Elizabeth Lovett Dolan and the attendance at the inaugural meeting in the Hibernian Hotel also included Bill O'Kelly's daughter Máire Hogan as well as Judy Collins, Geraldine O'Kelly, Moyra Potter and Carmel McHale, whose home became the venue for subsequent meetings.

The imaginative and entertaining fund-raising devices thought up by the new committee ranged from formal dances which showed profits of £200 and £300 back in the late sixties to piano and song recitals, tennis tournaments and barbecues which were making sums in the region of £6,000 in later years.

But it was the succession of wonderful after-opera suppers in St John's Hall in Clyde Road that will forever be remembered whenever the Ladies' Committee is mentioned. Singers from the current season came along to provide the cabaret, and a mini-group of six or seven of the ladies cooked all 200 meals – and those lucky enough to have been there will remember the cuisine with pleasure.

Other culinary delights were prepared by the ladies for luncheons and barbecues. Moyra Potter remembers ferrying half a bullock all the way from Wexford to provide beef stroganoff for armies of attendees at one barbecue. And Geraldine O'Kelly remembers the whole business of chopping, stripping and freezing as 'a monstrous operation'.

Like many such bodies, the division of labour didn't always fall evenly on all shoulders. Much of the hard work fell every time to the same small corps of willing workers. But there was an equally valuable input from those ladies whose responsibility it was to round up their friends to come and support the cause, over and over again. And some of the functions called for massive support, particularly the mega-barbecues in the grounds of Margaret McDonnell's home "Dalguise". One of these, at which the music was provided by the

Guinness Jazz band, raised an impressive £7,000 in 1974. Music of a more sober nature was provided at the same venue by pianist Jacques Klein, who gave two recitals, and by tenor Ugo Benelli.

The Committee's final function, a celebration of thirty years of fund-raising which raised over £8,000 last summer, featured a recital of Debussy, Chopin and Schubert by star pianist Hugh Tinney and a talk on Irish silver and painting by Brian Coyle of Adams Auctioneers.

Give or take a few departures and replacement, the personnel of the Ladies' Committee remained remarkably consistent during its lifetime. All of the members are still good friends, as you would expect, and whilst there was a general reluctance to highlight the efforts of any one individual member, everyone I spoke to was anxious to praise Margaret McDonnell for her unstinted support, not least in the ready offering of her home, throughout the life of the Committee.



Members of the original Ladies' Committee in 1967 (l to r) Moyra Potter, Judy Collins, Elizabeth Lovett Dolan, Geraldine O'Kelly and Carmel McHale

THE LADIES' COMMITTEE 1967-1998

Shirley Brown
Judy Collins,
Mary Egan
Fausta Hardy
Maire Hogan
Christine Hughes
Nuala Hughes
Pat Kelleher
Evelyn Kenny
Lucy Kennedy
Elizabeth Lovett Dolan
Daisy McArthur
Margaret McDonnell
Mai McGeown
Daphne McGlade
Carmel McHale
Jean Murray
Maureen O'Brien
Adaveen O'Driscoll
Geraldine O'Kelly
Mafra O'Reilly
Rose O'Rourke
Caroline Phelan
Moyra Potter
Norma Powell
Therese Rafferty
Pauline Tierney